

## Corporate Reputation Strategy and Customer Satisfaction in Selected Banks in Lagos State

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### Abstract

Corporate image of any organization must be protected, respected and valued because any deviation from this may negatively affect the reputation of the organization which consequently leads to customer dissatisfaction. This study investigated the effect of corporate reputation strategy and customer satisfaction in selected banks in Lagos State. Descriptive survey design was adopted. 106,405 was the total population of customers of four selected banks in Lagos state. The Cochran (1963) infinite population formula was adopted with the application of proportionate random sampling technique to derive a sample size of 2000 and 1,949 responses came successfully. Structured questionnaire was administered with moderated 6 point Likert scale. Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation Analysis, ANOVA and Linear Regression Analysis Coefficients were all used to analyses data and test hypothesis. Corporate reputation management (CRM) indicated strong positive effect on customer satisfaction (CS) as ( $R=0.839$ ;  $F=4736.378$ ;  $P=0.000$ ). The study recommends that banks should uphold the corporate image and reputation of their organisations by exploring other strategies, this will enhance customers' satisfaction and sustained patronage.

**Keywords:** *Corporate reputation, Corporate image, Customer satisfaction, Strategy and Management.*

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### **Background to the Study**

In recent years, the development in the banking industry has made competition in the banking industry more critical. In order to maintain their customer base and strengthen a long-term customer relationship, the bank managements develop various strategies that focus more on the level of service and competence of service provision. Therefore, in a hyper-competitive market, banks are confronted with the challenge of retaining existing customers and attracting new ones. The maintenance of existing customers is seen as more important than the ability to pull new clients and this is premised on the fact that the cost of attracting new customers is much higher than the cost of retaining existing customers; thus customer satisfaction is essential to the success of banks. To survive in a competitive environment, banks strive to offer their customers something new in terms of services, products or incentives, because the competitive power of a bank is largely defined by the degree of its conformity to the needs of customers (Gerrard &

Cunningham, 2001; Bowen & Chen, 2001). Organizations require new capabilities for competitive success, such as customer relationships, product innovation, incentives and bonuses, customized products, employee skills, motivations, the firm's reputation and image, etc. Thus banks employ several marketing strategies solely to increase their deposit base. According to Rogers (2002) as cited by Aworemi, Odeyemi and Oyedokun (2012) marketing strategies are techniques employed by management to identify, anticipate and satisfy customers' requirements profitably. Management of organizations are, therefore, more interested in customer satisfaction than ever before and organizations are more customer-focused. In customer-driven economy firms are engaged in a stiff rat race to attract customers. Satisfied customers mean a long-term profitable business since they stay loyal to the firm (Gumesson, 2002).

### **Objective of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the effect of corporate reputation strategy on customer satisfaction. Specifically the study intends to ascertain how corporate reputation management can affect customer satisfaction in selected Nigerian banks.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the stiff competition in Nigerian banks, some banks, still do not regard customers relationship management as well as corporate reputation of the organisation as important giving way to poor negative perception of the banks by customers and poor performance. As stated in Kabuoh and Asikhia (2016) One of the major reasons of the 2005 Bank recapitalization and consolidation was low profitability and attended poor performance by some banks which lead to customer dis-satisfaction and switching. According to Nmegbu and Ogwo (2013) the internal crises in Nigerian banking industry between 2005 and 2009 which manifested failures of some banks and subsequent reforms proved that the internal service marketing strategy (corporate reputation management) was weak, hence had weak impact on customer satisfaction. Also, loss of confidence in the banking system causes serious, systemic economic problems (Weber, Erickson and Stone (2011).

The way customers see their banks, including the bank's corporate treatment of their stakeholders (customers included) has a great role to play in terms of boosting customer satisfaction and loyalty. All firms are interested in the identity which they project and as a result take deliberate positive steps towards the formation of positive identities for their own corporate interest. So corporate reputation is a powerful influence on whether

prospective consumers become customers (Williams, Buttle and Biggemann, 2012). In Nigeria, there seems to be a perceived performance and image ambiguity in the minds of bank customers. Nigerian business environment is characterized with political and socio-cultural factors that at times affect the performance of Nigerian companies in the areas of low market share, poor sales turn over, high cost of production, lack of foreign exchange to source needed inputs, low capital utilisation, poor power supply, and low quality of goods and services, among others (Kabuoh, Ogbuanu & Chieze, 2016). This causes dissatisfaction amongst bank customers and may lead to negative corporate reputation of affected companies.

### **Research Question**

On the basis of the stated objective above the study addressed the following question:  
How does corporate reputation management affect customer satisfaction?

### **Hypothesis**

**H<sub>0</sub>.** There is no significant relationship between corporate reputation management and customer satisfaction.

### **Literature Review**

Conceptual, Theoretical and Empirical issues were all reviewed regarding the study variables (Independent & Dependent)

### **Concept of Corporate Reputation Management**

Various authors have defined the subject matter differently while some have same views. Lewellyn (2002) defines reputation as the stakeholders' aggregate evaluation of their knowledge of a firm. This definition is shared by Wartrick (2002) and Gotsi and Wilson (2001). These scholars view reputation as the result of stakeholders' assessment. Various conflicting definitions of corporate reputation exist in literature. These contradictions ascend from the fact that the corporate reputation is viewed from different perspectives. Goldberg, Cohen and Fiegenbaum (2003), Mahon, (2002) Miles and Covin (2002) see corporate reputation as a fragile, intangible financial asset and a valuable resource for the firm. The scholars above view reputation from the angle of value and therefore conclude that it is an asset to the firm.

A more detailed definition which takes into account the various components of corporate reputation is given by Aneysha (2012:3)

Corporate reputation generally refers to how stakeholders, customers, employees, vendors, shareholders, local communities among others perceive the company. It might look different to an employee than to a customer or a shareholder, given each stakeholder's particular perspective and relative degree of knowledge of the company. Yet, reputation depends on a general consensus on a variety of attributes, including an ability to create outstanding products and services, a commitment to treat employees fairly, a consideration of environmental impact, and more. This is to suggest that reputation is shaped by all of a company's actions and inactions towards itself (internal) and the environment (external).

### **Measurement of Reputation**

The concept of corporate reputation has various components or attributes which represents the pillars upon which reputation is built. Aneysha (2012) identifies five attributes (people, pacesetters, products, performance and purpose) used in the measurement of reputation.

### **Concept of Customer Satisfaction**

Kotler and Armstrong (2012) preach that satisfaction is the post-purchase evaluation of products or services taking into consideration the expectations. Parker and Mathews (2001) submit that the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the customer is the customer's response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy or disconfirmation of previous expectations and the actual performance of a product or service. Prabhakaramand Satyal (2003) submit that the customer is the king in business and the basic purpose of any business is to satisfy the customer. Researchers have found that increasingly customer satisfaction has led organizations to higher profitability, customers' willingness to use more products, higher levels of customer retention and loyalty. Jamal and Naser (2002) posit that customer satisfaction is not only based on the estimation of customers towards the quality of service delivery, but also with customer experience with the service delivery process.

In their submission, Chigbu, Kabuoh, Chieze and Alagbe (2016) Customers who receive information from their banks through electronic media would certainly be more satisfied because they feel that their banks recognize them, are concerned about them, and have a sense of belonging to the bank. The customers who do not receive such information from their banks would ordinarily feel unrecognized and alienated. A perceived bank strategy is an attitude which relates to the superiority of a service, whereas satisfaction is related to a specific transaction. In present day competitive banking industry, customer satisfaction is considered as the essence of success. Due to the symbiotic relationship between bank strategies and customer satisfaction, both terms are often considered to be equal, but the fact is that satisfaction is a broader concept, while the evaluation of bank strategies is focused on a particular dimension of service. This is to suggest that bank strategies is a component of customer satisfaction (Zeithmal and Bitner, 2000).

### **Theoretical Review**

**Equity Theory:** The equity theory developed by Adams (1963) states that a man's rewards in exchange with others should be proportional to his investments. The equity theory suggests that the ratio of outcomes to inputs should be constant across participants in an exchange. So satisfaction occurs when the customer believes that his outcomes to input are equal to that of the exchange person.

### **Resource-based View Theory (RBV)**

The Resource-based view theory was popularized by Wenerfelt (1984) but was proposed by Penrose in 1959. The RBV argues that firms possess resources part of which enables them attain competitive advantage and part of which enable them to be superior over a long time in terms of performance(Wade & Hulland, 2004). This theory has its concentration on the explanation of performance variations in organizations (Crook, Ketchen, Combs & Todd, 2008).

RBV is a theory that takes an inside- out perspective of organisations. Firm's ability to outperform each other is determined by the efficiency status of the internal resources. The resource based view believes that firms are made of huge resources but different firms own diverse resource dimension of these resources. Therefore, for a firm to achieve competitive advantage and sustain such an advantage, there has to be some level of resource heterogeneity in its stock of resources which only them can control, it will be difficult to imitate and substitute or immobile or inelastic in supply (Ferreira, Raposo & Fernandes, 2013). Using this view, Wade and Hulland (2004) concede resources as assets and capabilities that are available and useful in detecting and responding to market opportunities or threats.

### **Empirical Review of Literature**

Azin, Mohammed & Mahdijeh (2012) evaluated the most influencing factors of service quality in Sepah Bank, Iran and found that security was considered the first priority from the perspective of both customers and the management while the service qualities like responsiveness, flexibility, convenience were the second priority. This finding is different from Ravichandran, Tamil, Arun & Prabhakaram (2010) finding in India. They examined the influence of perceived service quality on customer satisfaction and found that responsiveness was the most significant service quality in predicting overall satisfaction of customers. Although both service quality dimensions were instrumental in boosting customer satisfaction, they were different with respect to the most significant factor.

Ravichandran, et al. (2010) findings was supported by Salman, Babak, Muzaffar and Shabbir (2011) who evaluated customer satisfaction in the banking industry of Pakistan and Faisalabad. They found that although, all the service quality attributes of SERVQUAL (reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, tangibles) were positively related with customer satisfaction, responsiveness shared the highest positive correlation while tangibles showed the lowest positive correlation.

### **Methodology**

The study focused on the headquarters of four out of the number of commercial banks in Nigeria's banking sector. The banks include two old generation banks (Union Bank and First Bank) and two new generation banks (Diamond Bank and Eco Bank). These banks were purposively selected because of their large spread (branches), while the choice of Lagos is due to the fact that almost all the banks (95%) have their head offices in Lagos and thus, have more spread in Lagos. This is to suggest that all the commercial banks in Nigeria will not be used. Only a finite number (4) will be the focus of attention.

The customers' population at the headquarters of the four banks as at 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2013 are as follows:

Union bank	:	37,045
First bank	:	10,400
Diamond bank	:	<u>16,650</u>
<b>Total</b>		<b>106,405</b>

The source of the above figures is the customer service section of each headquarter of the four banks (Chigbu, 2014).

### Determination of Sample Size

The size of the sample represents the total population of subjects under investigation (Castillo, 2009).

The sample size for this study was derived using Cochran's (1963:75) sample size formula for known and unknown population, given as:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 p(1-p)}{e^2}$$

Where,  $n$  = sample size (for: Infinite Population)  
 $Z$  = alpha value at 95% level of confidence (1.96)  
 $p$  = degree of variability (50%)  
 $e$  = margin of error or level of precision (2.5%)

Applying the above we have that:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 p(1-p)}{e^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 * 0.5 * (1 - 0.5)}{0.025^2}$$

$n = 153$

Since our evaluation of customer satisfaction is focused on 106,405 customers, the sample size that will now be necessary for the purpose of this study is illustrated below using Cochran's finite population correction for proportion formula, thus:

$$n_o = \frac{n}{1 + \frac{(n-1)}{N}}$$

Where:

$n$  = sample size (for: infinite Population)

$n_o$  = sample size (for: finite Population)

$N$  = finite population size (Total number of customers from the office headquarters of the 4 bank)

$$n_o = \frac{1537}{1 + \frac{(1537-1)}{106,405}} = 1515$$

### Application of Sample Size to the Population

The four banks that were sampled in this study are Union Bank, First bank, Eco Bank and Diamond Bank, all in Lagos. Given the disparity in the number of customers among these four banks, it became needful to undertake a proportional allocation in order to obtain a representative sample that is proportionate to the population of each of the banks. To achieve this, we adopted a sampling fraction of  $n_o / N$ . The application of the  $n_o / N$  sampling fraction yields the following:

$$F = n_o / N$$

Where:

$F$  = sampling fraction

$n_o$  = sample size (for: finite Population) = 2000

$$N = \text{finite population size (Total number of customers from the office headquarters of the 4 bank)} = 106,405$$

$$\text{Therefore, } F = \frac{2,000}{106,405}$$

In order to derive a proportionate number of respondents for each office headquarter of the four banks, we adopted the following formula:

$$\frac{Y \times n_o}{N}$$

Where  $n_o$  = sample size of finite population  
 $N$  = finite population size  
 $Y$  = the number of customers at each office headquarter of the four banks

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Therefore: Union Bank} &= \frac{37045 \times 2000}{106405} = 696 \\ \text{First bank} &= \frac{42310 \times 2000}{106405} = 795 \\ \text{Eco bank} &= \frac{10400 \times 2000}{106405} = 196 \\ \text{Diamond bank} &= \frac{16650 \times 2000}{106405} = 313 \end{aligned}$$

The figures above show that from the sample size of 2,000 respondents, each office headquarter of the four banks would provide different number of respondents for interview; 696 respondents from Union bank; 795 respondents from First bank; 196 respondents from Eco bank and 313 respondents from Diamond Bank. This result is shown in the table below;

**Table 1**

<b>Bank HQ</b>	<b>No. of Customers</b>	<b>Proportionate Sample Size</b>
Union Bank	37,045	696
First bank	42,310	795
Eco Bank	10,400	196
Diamond Bank	16,650	313
<b>Total</b>	<b>106,405</b>	<b>2,000</b>

### **Method of Data Collection**

Due to the nature of information required in this study, the method of data collection included both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data source was through questionnaires. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents through the modified 6 points Likert scale covering two extremes of 'strongly agree' and 'strongly disagree', while the other secondary sources of information was from journals, texts and other related write-ups.

Item	Characteristics	Freq.	%	Mean	SD	CV	Remark	Total
1. My bank supports a Clean environment	Strongly disagreed	17	0.9					
	Disagreed	36	1.8					
	Fairly disagreed	121	6.2					
	Fairly agreed	360	18.5					
	Agreed	673	34.5					
	Strongly agreed	742	38.1	4.98	1.058	0.21	Agreed	1949
2. Workers in my bank look happy and satisfied	Strongly disagreed	39	2.0					
	Disagreed	60	3.1					
	Fairly disagreed	147	7.5					
	Fairly agreed	462	23.7					
	Agreed	725	37.2					
	Strongly agreed	516	26.5	4.70	1.146	0.24	Agreed	1949
3. My bank has enough money to operate	Strongly disagreed	25	1.3					
	Disagreed	33	1.7					
	Fairly disagreed	133	6.8					
	Fairly agreed	459	23.5					
	Agreed	743	38.2					
	Strongly agreed	556	28.5	4.81	1.056	0.22	Agreed	1949
4. The managers of my bank are good and experienced	Strongly disagreed	23	1.2					
	Disagreed	44	2.3					
	Fairly disagreed	123	6.3					
	Fairly agreed	472	24.2					
	Agreed	748	38.4					
	Strongly agreed	539	27.6	4.79	1.059	0.22	Agreed	1949
5. My bank helps to make life better for the society	Strongly disagreed	44	2.3					
	Disagreed	52	2.7					
	Fairly disagreed	137	7.0					
	Fairly agreed	422	21.6					
	Agreed	691	35.5					
	Strongly agreed	603	30.9	4.78	1.167	0.24	Agreed	1949
Pooled				4.82	0.877	0.18	Agreed	1949

**Source:** Field Survey 2014. Scale Mean (3.5). SD (Standard Deviation). CV (Coefficient of Variation).



**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation Analysis**

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Pearson Correlation (R)	Sig.
Customer satisfaction	4.74	0.719	1949	0.839*	0.000
Corporate reputation management	4.82	0.877	1949		

\*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.  $R^2 = 0.704$  (70.4%)

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2014

**Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	726.805	1	726.805	4736.378	0.000
Residual	306.596	1947	0.153		
Total	1033.401	1948			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction. b. Predictors: (Constant), CRM.

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2016

The ANOVA table suggests that the variation in the dependent variable accounted for by the model is adequate at  $F = 4736.378$ ,  $P\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$  significant level. This result shows that there is a significant relationship between corporate reputation management and customer satisfaction, thereby rejecting the acceptance of the null hypothesis,  $H_0$

### Discussion

The result of the hypothesis stipulates that there is a strong positive relationship between corporate reputation management and customer satisfaction. This agrees with the assertions by Williams, M, Buttle, F and Biggemann, S. (2012). They opined in their study that the way customers see their banks with respect to high quality products and services, treatment of its employees, being environmentally friendly, proof of financial stability and demonstration of clear vision and strong leadership impacts positively on the customers and such banks are held in high esteem more than those who lag behind in all these attributes. In the findings of Murray and White's (2004) the role of public relations is to make sure that the organization is getting credit for the good it does. Great reputations are built on doing this consistently over a period of time in which a track record on delivering on promises and engendering trust is evident to everyone. This finding will help bank management to pay proper attention to both their ownership structure, their corporate image and general performance.

## Linear Regression Model

**Table 4: Regression Analysis Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.425	0.049		29.134	0.000
Corporate reputation management	0.688	0.010	0.839	68.821	0.000

Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2016

Simple regression analysis was used to determine the effect of corporate reputation management on Customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction represents the dependent variable, while corporate reputation management represents the independent variable. The result of the analysis reveals that corporate reputation management is significant at  $t = 68.821$ ,  $P\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$  significant level. Hence, corporate reputation management has significant direct effect on Customer satisfaction. The simple regression model is given as:

Customer satisfaction = 1.425 + 0.688, Corporate reputation management.

The model implies that, based on the data collected, a unit increase in corporate reputation management will increase Customer satisfaction by 0.688 (68.8%).

## Conclusion and Summary of Research Findings

Corporate reputation management has a significant effect on customer satisfaction across the four banks. The implication of the result is that the banks' corporate social responsibility in relation to supporting a clean environment, taking care of staff, having a strong financial base, and a good management team and helping to build a better society were satisfactory to customers. This is to suggest that customers appreciate a clean environment and will relate with those who promote it. The sight of workers who look happy and contented gives customers a feeling of confidence in their banks. It is very easy to conclude that only a rich and affluent bank can maintain a team of satisfied workers. Additionally, when customers believe that their bank is financially strong and viable and with a good management team, they will be more confident to deal with the bank. They will tend to believe that the bank will never go down. Moreover, when customers understand that their banks are involved in social projects (like provision of bore-hole, provision of free medi-care once in a while, etc) they will feel satisfied that their banks are interested in the welfare of the society.

However, it is clear that all the respondents were not satisfied with their banks' corporate reputation strategies. Quite a good proportion of respondents were fairly satisfied which amounts to fair satisfaction. Coupled with the number that actually disagreed with the statements (which shows dissatisfaction) it is apparent that the banks still need to concentrate effort on their corporate reputation strategies in order to enhance customer satisfaction.

## Recommendations

1. The image of the organization is very vital in terms of satisfying the customer. The management of banks should expand and explore other strategies of projecting good and more acceptable images so that they will retain the trust and confidence of customers.
2. On the whole, customer satisfaction is a great challenge to the banking organization. As a result of competition, banks try to woo existing and potential customers with good products and services in order to keep what they have and attract new ones.
3. The sole aim of competition is to outwit one another. The banks that are able to satisfy their customers by various means are the ones that eventually make profit and can afford to look into the future with optimism.

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